

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL
DEADLINE TODAY**

Today (Friday, January 24) was the first important deadline of the 2003-04 legislative session: The date by which bill drafting requests must be submitted to Legislative Counsel.

Like almost all other legislative deadlines, the "Leg Counsel Deadline" is not absolute; bills (and amendments) can and will be accepted and drafted by Legislative Counsel after this date. Better stated, January 24 is the last day by which the Legislative Counsel's office will guarantee that requested legislation will be back in the requesting lawmaker's hands in time to meet the next, more important, deadline: The February 21 deadline for introduction of bills.

The "Legislative Counsel" deadline can be problematic for the individuals and organizations which sponsor legislation, because many (perhaps most) lawmakers have not finalized their legislative programs by January 24, and often are not willing to commit to authoring a particular legislative proposal by that date. The work-around for this problem is for sponsors to get legislators to submit their legislative proposals to Legislative Counsel for drafting "unbacked" – i.e., without an author's name on the bill. This keeps the clock running on the proposal, and gives the proponent a few additional weeks to obtain a legislative author.

Bill requests submitted to Legislative Counsel are confidential and privileged, so the deadline provides no advance notice of what legislation might be introduced in the future.

BUDGET STILL IN THE NEWS

The budget mess still dominates what is going on in the Capitol. In brief, here are the key things going on with the budget: 1. No one can agree on the amount of the deficit. Governor

Davis's Department of Finance claims the deficit is around \$35 billion. The Legislature's Office of the Legislative Analyst maintains the deficit is around \$21 billion. And the Chapman University Anderson Center for Economic Research pegs the deficit at "only" \$6 billion.

2. Because the deficit dollar amounts differ so much, there are charges flying around the Capitol that games are being played with the budget numbers. In sum, whose numbers are to be trusted?

And 3, some key Democrats in the Legislature want to increase the motor vehicle tax. This idea goes against what Davis and his new Director of the Department of Finance (former Senator Steve Peace) think is the right thing to do for resolving the current budget deficit, and future budget problems.

**IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE
DATES AND NOTES**

- January 24 - Last day to submit bill requests to the Office of Legislative Counsel.
- February 21 - Last day for bills to be introduced. Once a bill has been introduced - either in the Assembly or the Senate - it can not be heard in a policy committee (such as Judiciary, Revenue and Taxation) for at least 30 days. Hence, do not expect many bill to be heard until at least the middle of March.
- May 2 - Last day for policy committees to hear and report bills to the fiscal committee (Assembly or Senate Appropriations Committee) fiscal bills introduced in their house of origin.
- May 9 - Last day for policy committees to hear and report nonfiscal bills introduced in their house to the floor of their house. The "floor" is where the entire house votes on bills.